

## Report for Resolution

**Report to** Executive  
4 February 2009  
**Report of** Head of Community Services  
**Subject** Review of the two Neighbourhood Management pilot's

---

9

### Purpose

To report the results of the evaluation of the two Neighbourhood Management Pilot programmes

### Recommendations

The Executive are requested to:

1. Comment on the progress of the two neighbourhood management programmes and their contribution to the implementation of the Council's Neighbourhood Strategy
2. Agree to continue the Mile Cross and Catton programme for a further year to further test the approach with a dedicated community resource, subject to the budget process
3. Ask officers to ask the NELM Development Trust to extend their Neighbourhood Management Scheme to 31.03.10
4. Ask officers for a further report at a later date on proposals for the future of neighbourhood management and neighbourhood working particularly in light of the Government's announcement on unitary structures in Norwich and Norfolk in March

### Financial Consequences

The financial consequences of this report are that the continuation of Neighbourhood Management in Mile Cross and Catton can be met from existing budgetary provision

### Risk Assessment

The core objectives of the Council's neighbourhood strategy is that neighbourhood level working should improve service delivery, improve community participation and empowerment and seek to narrow the gap between differing neighbourhoods in Norwich. Neighbourhood Management is one mechanism for the Council to achieve these objectives and to continue to develop best practice and should be continued on this basis.

## **Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities**

The report helps to meet the strategic priority “Safe and healthy neighbourhoods – working in partnership with residents to create neighbourhoods where people feel secure, where the streets are clean and well maintained, where there is good quality housing and local amenities and where there are active local communities” and the service plan priority to develop a place shaping role of neighbourhood management

**Executive Member:** Councillor Blakeway -Neighbourhood Development

**Ward:** Mile Cross, Catton, Wensum, Bowthorpe (part)

### **Contact Officers**

Bob Cronk

01603 212373

### **Background Documents**

The Neighbourhood Strategy

## Report

### Background

1. In November 2006, the Executive agreed to establish the post of Neighbourhood Manager for Mile Cross & Catton with grant-aid from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. A second programme has been operating within the NELM area (North Earlham, Larkman and Marlpit) hosted by the NELM Development Trust with funding from the New Deal programme.
2. In March 2007, the Executive approved a Neighbourhood Strategy which drew together a range of work already in place in neighbourhoods and extended it through the piloting of neighbourhood management and service delivery initiatives, as well as the roll-out, with partners, of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Panels.
3. The underpinning philosophy outlined in the Neighbourhood Strategy is that neighbourhood management should:
  - improve service delivery on the ground
  - improve community participation and empowermentand in line with principles of neighbourhood renewal:
  - seek to narrow the gap between differing neighbourhoods in Norwich
4. The neighbourhood strategy stated that neighbourhood management formed part of the first phase of implementation of this work and would be externally evaluated.
5. A progress report on the neighbourhood strategy was considered by the Executive on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008 where the Executive agreed a two stage approach to neighbourhood working.
6. Phase one was to:
  - continue to extend neighbourhood working through a phased development approach
  - focus on improving the approach to community engagement during 2008/09 and work with resident and community groups to develop this new approach and the development of a community engagement strategy
  - extend the neighbourhood management pilot for Mile Cross and Catton through to March 2009 to allow a community development approach to be incorporated through the appointment of a dedicated community engagement officer for the area.
7. Phase two recognised the potential of a new unitary authority with the extension of the current City Council boundary and the necessary review of existing key service delivery contracts which would allow the opportunity for a more radical approach to neighbourhood working, including structural change.

This would focus on developing further proposals, including exploring structural approaches to locality service delivery and neighbourhood engagement.

8. The appointment of a dedicated community engagement officer would free up the neighbourhood manager to focus on:
  - developing a partnership neighbourhood action plan for the area which recognised the local issues and would contribute to “narrowing the gap”
  - work with services to seek integration and address barriers to services and poor service delivery in the locality
  - to further develop partnership approaches on the ground
9. The community development approach was to be provided by the additional resource agreed by the Executive in March 2008 to create the community engagement team. The community engagement officer has only recently been allocated to the area and the evaluation has therefore not been able to measure the effectiveness of this approach.

### **Year 1 evaluation**

10. An interim evaluation was carried out in autumn 2007 by Holden and McAllister of both pilot areas which identified progress in a number of areas, though due to the momentum achieved in the NELM area through the New Deal programme, more progress had been achieved in this programme.
11. The evaluation stated that *“It is evident from our interviews with the heads of service, who relate to the ‘Cleaner, Greener and Safer’ agenda, that they recognise the level and effectiveness of the existing services that should be provided in the neighbourhood is something they need to review on a collaborative basis with the neighbourhood manager”*.
12. The evaluation recognised that:
  - neighbourhood management had moved forward considerably over the short period of time the NELM and Mile Cross and Catton neighbourhood managers have been in post (9 months and 6 months respectively)
  - there was a need to establish a problem solving approach to the emerging issues in the area
  - the development and use of a neighbourhood profile and action plan can be used to facilitate and drive joined-up, customer focused, long-term solutions to the issues in the area alongside some shorter, more visible signs of change within the area
13. Since this interim evaluation in 2007, the managers appointed to the posts in both areas have left and new appointments made. In Mile Cross and Catton the first manager resigned in February 2008 prior to the confirmation of continuation funding and the current manager started employment in May 2008.
14. The programmes are overseen by a joint steering group chaired by Cllr Blakeway (in a dual role as portfolio holder for neighbourhood development and ward councillor) and include Cllr Makoff as a ward councillor, community representatives, and service representatives from landlord services, citizen

services the police, NHS Norfolk and Children's Services.

## Year 2 evaluation

15. A 2<sup>nd</sup> evaluation was carried out by Holden and McAllister in October 2008 using a similar format to year one. This included interviews with:

- Relevant Council heads of service and service managers
- Partner agencies such as the police
- Certain Executive members
- Community representatives

The report covers:

- the background to neighbourhood management, nationally and in Norwich
- a review of the development of the two pilot neighbourhood management programmes
- considers the lesson learnt to date and makes operational recommendations for the future development of neighbourhood management in Norwich

16. The key messages from the evaluation are that the Norwich neighbourhood management pilots so far reflect:

- Partial decentralisation of a limited aspect of service delivery through the *virtual teams* working together to take forward aspects of the safer, cleaner greener agenda
- The impact on service design has been limited to the delivery of specific environmental improvement projects
- Relatively robust arrangements for the coordination of SNAP priorities led by the neighbourhood managers. This has included organising post SNAP meetings to co-ordinate joint problem solving (in Mile Cross and Catton the manager has taken responsibility for co-ordinating city council services) and pre-meetings to review progress. (This is something that the report recommends should be formalised into a multi-agency neighbourhood forum). However the neighbourhood managers have no direct responsibilities for the management of service delivery
- Strengthened community involvement in the SNAP process and the neighbourhood management teams' engagement with community groups, although there is still some way to go in relation to the BME community and hard to reach groups
- Both neighbourhood managers play a key role as a *customer advocate* - advocating and supporting a local 'customer perspective' in public service provision, identifying local problems, communicating these to providers and pursuing 'joined up' solutions; and as a *local broker* - supporting networking, relationship building and joint working between service providers at a neighbourhood level. Their role in multi-agency problem solving is increasingly prominent and welcomed by service providers and partner agencies

17. Attached also are the comments provided by the Neighbourhood Management Joint Steering Group which is chaired by Cllr Blakeway – see appendix 1.

### **The impacts of neighbourhood management**

18. By using the expected outcomes from the neighbourhood strategy to measure the effectiveness of the two pilots, the evaluation indicates the following progress:

**a) Improve service delivery on the ground**

- evidence of leading partnership based problem solving by bringing together relevant partner and services
- co-ordinating the activity leading from SNAP priorities
- resolving one off or project based issues

**b) Improve community participation and empowerment**

- evidence of a customer advocacy role and the Neighbourhood Managers being a local broker

**c) Seek to narrow the gap** between differing neighbourhoods in Norwich

- no evidence to date

19. One of the successes has been the neighbourhood manager's role in bringing together the "virtual teams" identified in the neighbourhood strategy and co-ordinating partnership problem solving and activity providing a more structured approach to this work. This will continue to develop and the allocation of a community engagement officer in December 2008 to the Mile Cross and Catton area will provide the opportunity to embed this further.

20. The evaluation identifies that the lack of a community development / engagement resource has meant that the neighbourhood manager has been drawn down into community work (community engagement, community profiling) and the more strategic work of challenging poor service delivery or additional or refocused services required to meet local need has not been undertaken.

21. If the neighbourhood management programme is continued in Mile Cross and Catton Grove, the work of the current post holder will need to be refocused to ensure that the work aligns with but does not overlap with the community engagement officer's role.

22. From the outset the two Norwich pilots were different with one being led by the NELM Development Trust and the second in the Mile Cross and Catton Grove area by the City Council.

23. Neighbourhood Management was one of the main programmes in the NELM Strategic Plan and planned to work with mainstream agencies to improve local services focussing particularly on the clean, green and safe agenda. Sitting outside of the main providers of clean, green and safe services, the evaluation suggests that it has been "on the outside looking in." Whilst significant progress has been made, the programme has not had consistent access into services and the evaluation suggests that this has been a limitation. With the development trust in the closing years of regeneration funding, the trust has

24. In contrast the evaluation suggests that engagement with Council services by the Mile Cross and Catton Manager has been more straightforward with teams welcoming the manager to internal meetings and through this being able to understand the role, what can be offered from the programme and have shown a willingness to co-operate.
25. The evaluation also relates the progress and lessons learnt from the pilots with the Norwich Needs Analysis and identifies that the programmes have found it easier to achieve “place” based outcomes e.g. environmental improvements, one off physical projects, rather than “people” based outcomes such as those focussing on education, health and worklessness.
26. The existence of a joint partnership steering group for the programmes has started to address some of the current cross cutting and people based issues. Nevertheless, the evaluation indicates the need for better strategic partnership based work around neighbourhood management to shape responses particularly on the people based outcomes and the shape of neighbourhood working in a post unitary environment

### **Lessons learnt and the future of neighbourhood management**

27. The evaluation discusses a number of conclusions and includes recommendations. These are set in the context of the evaluation of a national programme of pathfinder neighbourhood management programmes, and the lessons learned from these.
28. The elements of neighbourhood management considered to be important are:
- The co-ordination and management of service delivery within the neighbourhood
  - Community involvement in the design and delivery of neighbourhood services
  - Decentralisation of service design and delivery for the neighbourhood
29. The evaluation suggests that the pilots so far reflect:
- Partial decentralisation of very limited service delivery through virtual teams with impact showing only on specific projects
  - Relatively robust arrangements for the co-ordination of SNAP priorities led by the managers
  - Strengthened community involvement in the SNAP process and a number of projects
30. The evaluation of the national pathfinder programme describes the process of change brought about by neighbourhood management as being based on two

main assumptions.

- neighbourhood management programme will be able to influence service providers to change the way in which services are delivered; and
- these service providers, by changing that way that their services are delivered, will be able more effectively and efficiently to address the problems and needs identified in the neighbourhood.

31. In the longer run neighbourhood management is about achieving culture change, moving from a 'fire fighting' culture to a proactive and planned approach to neighbourhoods. Although this will take time, the evaluation of the Norwich programmes find early indications of positive service engagement with neighbourhood management by safer, cleaner and greener services which is an encouraging start.
32. The engagement in both areas of a core group of services around the 'cleaner, greener and safer' agenda is similar to what has been found in the national pathfinder evaluation. This identifies the police, housing and environmental services as three of the four services that are "core supporters" of neighbourhood management.
33. The fourth identified nationally is primary and secondary schools who have also engaged to varying degrees in the two pilots.
34. The national report goes on to state that "*for neighbourhood management to achieve real culture change it needs strategic and leadership support*".

## **Recommendations from the Evaluation Report**

### **35. Recommendation :**

*The City Council and its partners in the City of Norwich Partnership consider agreed boundaries upon which a broader range of services are configured within a common framework on an area basis in Norwich.*

*The City Council and its partners in the City of Norwich Partnership establish an Operational Board for Area Coordination and Neighbourhood Management, constituted at senior officer level with strong member and partner agency representation.*

36. Officers have started to consider the Council's approach to neighbourhood working and how this is embedded across the Council.
37. This includes how the respective roles of neighbourhood management and community engagement contribute to the three expected outcomes of the neighbourhood strategy, which are:
- To improve service delivery on the ground
  - To improve community participation and empowerment
  - Seek to narrow the gap between differing neighbourhoods in Norwich
38. Further work is required to develop this particularly with partners, perhaps



through the City of Norwich Partnership but the key elements are:

**1) Engagement in the community**

The co-ordination of all consultation and engagement work across the Council through a cross council officer group. Enhanced local working with the deployment of the community engagement team.

**2) Data collection**

The capture of Council and partners data (including information from the Norwich Needs Analysis) about neighbourhoods as well as softer community data to inform and shape neighbourhood working and ensure it is visible to teams that are currently working at or developing services at a neighbourhood level.

**3) Neighbourhood Management**

Establish how services work at a neighbourhood level - the teams have a geographical focus to their work. What work is done, what has been learned from this approach and what has been done and achieved differently? This will include the learning from the neighbourhood management pilot programmes and the recommendations contained within the evaluation

**4) Neighbourhood plans**

The development of plans that are informed by data, and the views and aspirations of partners and communities.

39. Many of these elements have started to be undertaken to date within the two pilot areas with qualitative and quantitative data shaping approaches and neighbourhood plans starting to be developed.

40. Recommendation

*The City Council and its partners adopt a community planning process for the operation of neighbourhood management in selected deprived areas of Norwich.*

41. The integration of effective neighbourhood working and community engagement will take time to embed as the capacity of residents (including the involvement of hard to reach groups which the programmes have not fully addressed) and council officers to engage in this process is developed. This role in facilitating this will be undertaken by the new community engagement team.

42. Recommendation

*Service business plans should be required to demonstrate the contribution they are making to achieving community plan and area coordination priorities*

43. There has been an impact to both programmes of not being able to sustain post holders over the 18 months of the pilot programmes so the evaluation is recognising progress but with understandable qualification

44. The NELM Neighbourhood Manager has recently secured employment with the

Council's community engagement team and the Chief Executive of the NELM Development Trust has reported to the joint steering group that NELM are not proposing to continue neighbourhood management in its present format as they feel it is now a mainstreaming responsibility. NELM have developed a hybrid post combining the remaining programme delivery and some elements of neighbourhood manager through to 2010 though by its very nature, this will be a different role and not at a similar level.

45. The joint steering group have raised concerns about the apparent loss of neighbourhood management in the NELM area and the approach proposed by NELM for 2009-10.

46. Recommendation:

*The City Council enters into dialogue with NELM about mainstreaming the post of neighbourhood manager within the City Council. As the NRF funding for the neighbourhood manager for Mile Cross & Catton Grove ends in March 2009, there is also an urgent need to consider mainstreaming the post within the City Council. At the same time there is an opportunity to consider the most appropriate grade both for this post and that of HELM neighbourhood manager if that is mainstreamed*

47. Consideration should now be given of bringing together the two stage approach to the implementation of the neighbourhood strategy that was agreed by the Executive in February 2008. This would allow the lessons learnt to date from neighbourhood management and the community engagement work that is starting to be implemented, to shape the Council's approach to neighbourhood working in a post unitary authority environment with outcome of the review of local government in Norwich and Norfolk imminent.